

250 Columbia Boulevard
Waterbury, CT 06710
www.southmayd.org
Tel: (203) 754-0360
Fax: (203) 753-1761

Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and Members of the Public Health Committee:

Re: SB 249, AAC CONCERNING THE USE OF THE TERM "ASSISTED LIVING"

My name is Marda Gutierrez and I am the Executive Director of Southmayd Home, a licensed not-for-profit residential care home established in Waterbury since 1898. I am in opposition to SB 249 for three main reasons:

- 1) According to the definition of the US government and a national assisted living organization, despite the fact that we are licensed as a Residential Care Home, Southmayd Home does actually provide assisted living services.
- 2) Prohibiting the use of the generic term "assisted living" is unfair and would significantly impact our marketing ability to communicate our services to potential residents and/or their families.
- 3) Rather than protect the consumer, this bill prevents the consumer from being informed of viable living options and available services.

Please allow me to elaborate on these three points. What is the definition of Assisted Living? The US Government Department of Health and Human Services website states: "Assisted living facilities offer a housing alternative for older adults who may need help with dressing, bathing, eating, and toileting, but do not require the intensive medical and nursing care provided in nursing homes.... Licensing requirements for assisted living facilities vary by state and can be known by as many as 26 different names including: residential care, board and care, congregate care, and personal care."

According to the Assisted Living Federation of America's website, assisted living is defined as "a long-term care option that combines housing, support services and health care, as needed... Assisted living is designed for individuals who require assistance with everyday activities such as meals, medication management or assistance with bathing, dressing and transportation."

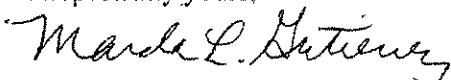
Southmayd Home provides all meals, medication management, assistance with bathing, dressing and transportation. If we agree with these organization's definitions, regardless of what we are called or the license we hold, Southmayd Home provides assisted living services.

In reference to my second point, prohibiting the use of the term "assisted living" could inhibit our ability to reach potential residents and significantly impact our bottom line. With the passage of this bill, Southmayd Home could be fined if we listed our facility in the Yellow Pages or on the Internet under the heading of Assisted Living. Even though the words "assisted living" correctly describe our services, this bill would deny our use of this generic term when marketing our services to the public.

My final point refers to the bill's premise that it protects the consumer. Seniors needing assistance, especially those with limited income, often incorrectly believe that a nursing home is their only option. Facilities such as Southmayd Home, as well as the other 100 residential care homes providing assistance with activities of daily living or ADL's as they are also often called, offer our seniors a viable alternative to living alone. If we truly wish to "protect" the consumer, rather than place restrictions on information by prohibiting the use of such a generic term as assisted living, we should seek to help the consumer be better informed and able to understand all the service choices and living options that are available.

To conclude: the services provided by Southmayd Home; all meals, medication management and assistance with bathing, dressing and transportation, are consistent with nationally recognized definitions of assisted living services. Rather than protect the consumer, this bill would unfairly prohibit us from communicating our services to the public as assisted living services. I urge you to vote no on this bill.

Respectfully yours,



Marda L. Gutierrez
Executive Director